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To the Congregation of the Church of Our Lord, Victoria, B. C.

DEAR BRETHREN AND FRIENDS:

Without formally calling you together, but in view of your unfailing kindness and consideration, I have presumed on your assent to a step which I feel to be proper to my advancing years. I thank my God, who has been so merciful to me all my life long, in that while naturally more subject to ailments, necessitating precaution, I am neither decrepit nor burdened with sensible failure, mentally or physically. At the same time, at 72, I deem it only right to economise, so far as in me lies, what strength I have, by calling in assistance in the discharge of my own proper share in the work of the ministry over you.

I trust and believe that I am not without the Divine guidance in taking this step. A clergyman of our church in the East, well nurtured in protestant principles amid liturgical surroundings, having formed the desire of coming to our province, has, through the introduction of Bishop Ussher, offered himself for work in my jurisdiction, the result being that he has accepted a six months' engagement as my curate and personal assistant, to join me, God willing, about the beginning of the year, I owe to you, no less than to my age, most dear friends, this contributive increase to our ministerial strength. It would have been, however, presumptuous and ungrateful on my part, had I, in this arrangement, contemplated any addition to your already heavy burdens. I rely simply on the allowance which I now receive from you, coupled with perhaps some added attention on your part, or rather I should say, seeing how much of the burden is wont to rest on a few, some awakened attention on the part of each one, to enable your wardens punctually to supply the same, for my discharge of this obligation. My dear wife, who for so many years has been my faithful fellow worker and true help meet, is more than willing to conform her domestic arrangements to our diminished resources, my daughters also most cordially concurring.

As my need of supplementary assistance cannot be expected to diminish with time, it is my hope and purpose, should my assistant find favour in your sight, and himself be so disposed, to retain his services so long as, together with my beloved colleague, Dr. Reid, whose co-operation during these past four years, through your liberality, has been to me most helpful and refreshing, it may please God that I shall continue in this ministry.

Meanwhile I venture to hope for your further consent at some convenient time after the arrival of my assistant, to my taking a recess from active duty for a suitable period, hoping after such recess to resume my work as God shall give me strength.

Permit me then, dearest friends, to bespeak on behalf of this brother, and on behalf of his wife, like-minded with himself, that kindness and graciousness of welcome which I myself have found so marked in all our mutual relations.

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In conclusion, Christian brethren and friends, witnesses for a faith and worship pure and undefiled, suffer the word of exhortation from one who must soon give account of the way in which he has led the Lord's flock, whether in the way of heresy and schism, or in the way of the unity of the faith according to the word of truth in the Gospel, uncorrupted by art or human device. Consider well, I beseech you, why you are reformed episcopalians. Examine your foundations, and make sure that you are building on a rock. Although your friendship is very precious to me, and has more than made amends for wrongs which, even apart from this place, are not worthy to be named along with the name of Christ, who has made suffering and reproach a blessing and a joy rather than a complaint to all who witness for Him, yet let us all remember, as in his sight, that our testimony is worse than vain if it rest only on a personal foundation. If our end be not the truth of the Gospel, threatened with overthrow by the traditions of men, we have no right to exist, neither can we stand longer than the fluctuating elements on which we lean. Stand fast, therefore, in the faith, considering your true, your only end, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Put the world under your feet. Beware of those who arrogate dominion over the body of Christ to glorify themselves. The blessing of God be upon you. My earnest prayer for you all is that you may be not only a congregation of faithful worshippers, witnessing for your children as well as for yourselves, but also a refuge for others, especially for our liturgical brethren, strangers from England or elsewhere, for whom you should ever have a warm and hearty welcome, as for those who desire to worship God, undisturbed by pretensions and practices through which, in every land, so many are being led away from the faith, the Protestant faith; that faith for which so many shed their blood; that faith which is Christ our only Head and 'Lord,' and King, and His word our only law; to whom alone be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Your Servant and brother in Him,

E. Cridge,
Bishop, R. E. C.

VICTORIA, B. C.,
Nov. 25th, 1890.

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